



Impact of childhood exposure to a natural disaster on adult mental health: 20-year longitudinal follow-up study

Author(s): McFarlane AC, Van Hooff M
Year: 2009
Journal: The British Journal of Psychiatry : The Journal of Mental Science. 195 (2): 142-148

Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Studies examining the impact of childhood disaster exposure on the development of adult psychopathology report increased rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other psychopathology. **AIMS:** To examine the rates of PTSD and other lifetime DSM-IV disorders in adults exposed to an Australian bushfire disaster as children in 1983 using a matched control sample recruited at the time of the original study. **METHOD:** A total of 1011 adults recruited from an original sample of 1531 were assessed 20 years following the fires using the Composite International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI-2.1). **RESULTS:** Results showed only a small direct impact of the fires on adult psychiatric morbidity. A higher proportion of bushfire survivors met criteria for 'any DSM-IV disorder' and 'any anxiety'. **CONCLUSIONS:** Findings suggest that the long-term impact of a prominent trauma in childhood should be assessed in the context of other lifetime trauma in order to provide a more accurate account of PTSD prevalence rates.

Source: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.108.054270>

Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event

Extreme Weather Event: Wildfires

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Australasia

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Mental Health/Stress

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Stress Disorder

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Children

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Resilience:

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content